

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08  
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 CU-04 BIB-01 SOE-02  
AID-05 CEA-01 DODE-00 DOE-11 H-01 INT-05 L-03  
NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06 OES-07 SP-02 SS-15  
STR-06 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 PRS-01 PA-01 /127 W  
-----030326 171405Z /46

R 170830Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6731  
INFO USMISSION USNATO  
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, UR

SUBJECT: OPEN LETTER APPEALS FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY

SUMMARY: PRAVDA (JANAUARY 14) CARRIES FULL FRONT PAGE LETTER FROM TOP PARTY, GOVERNMENT, TRADE UNION AND YOUTH ORGANIZATION BODIES APPEALING FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY IN SOVIET PRODUCTION IN 1978. IN ASSESSING RESULTS OF FIRST TWO YEARS OF CURRENT FIVE YEAR PLAN, LETTER FINDS MORE TO BLAME THAN TO PRAISE AND NOTES THAT OLD PROBLEMS OF WASTEFUL USE OF RESOURCES IS CONTINUING, AND THAT VOLUME OF UNFINISHED CONSTRUCTION IS STILL RISING. LETTER FAILS TO MENTION WHICH MEASURES LEADERSHIP MAY HAVE IN MIND TO REMEDY THIS SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. PRAVDA (JANUARY 14) PUBLISHES IN FOUR COLUMN SPREAD OCCUPYING FIRST PAGE AND ONE HALF OF THE NEWSPAPER THE TEXT OF A JOINT LETTER FROM COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, SUPREME TRADE UNION COUNCIL AND MOMSOMOL CENTRAL COMMITTEE APPEALING TO CONSTITUENTS AND ALL SOVIET WORKERS TO

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"FULFILL AND SURPASS" 1978 PLAN AND TO INTENSIFY STRUGGLE FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY AND HIGHER QUALITY IN PRODUCTION. ALTHOUGH THE JOINT LETTER CONTAINS PRAISE, ITS DOMINANT THEME IS THAT SOVIET SYSTEM IN THRID YEAR OF "SO-CALLED PLAN OF EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY" CONTINUES TO REFLECT WASTE OF LABOR, RAW MATERIALS (INCLUDING FUELS) AND MACHINERY. WE ASSUME DEPARTMENT HAS TEXT OF LETTER AND THEREFORE CONFINE OURSELVES TO HIGHLIGHTS.

2. WE FOUND THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST:  
ACCORDING TO THE JOINT LETTER -

- ONE OF EVERY ELEVEN ENTERPRISES FAILED TO MEET TARGETS IN THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF PRESENT FIVE YEAR PLAN, AT COST OF FOUR BILLION RUBLES.
- ABSENTEEISM, IDLENESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE COST THREE BILLION RUBLES OF POTENTIAL PRODUCTION IN 1977 IN INDUSTRY ALONE. FULL CAPACITY WAS NOT UTILIZED IN THE OUTPUT OF PIG IRON, STEEL, MINERAL FERTILIZER, TRACTORS, METAL CUTTING MACHINERY AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.
- "TENS OF THOUSANDS" OF MACHINES WERE IDLE DAILY IN 1977 IN SOVIET ENGINEERING WORKS, A FAULT WHICH THE LETTER ATTRIBUTED IN PART TO THE PREVALENT USE OF ONLY ONE LABOR SHIFT. TRACTORS ON STATE AND COLLECTIVE FARMS WERE IDLE 13 PERCENT OF THE TIME.
- THE WASTEFUL USE OF METALS IS UNACCEPTABLE, WITH MILLIONS OF TONS SUSPENDED IN UNFINISHED CONSTRUCTION AND UNINSTALLED EQUIPMENT (THE VOLUME OF WHICH CONTINUES TO RISE) AND WITH LARGE LOSSES THROUGH REJECTION OF PRODUCTION (I.E. ON GROUNDS OF QUALITY OR SUITABILITY).
- SOME 3,000 ENTERPRISES AND ORGANIZATIONS EXCEEDED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AUTHORIZED USE OF FUEL AND SOME 2,600 THE USE OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY, COSTING SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MEET THE ANNUAL NEEDS OF "SEVERAL LARGE CITIES."

- ANNUALLY GREAT QUANTITIES OF GRAIN, POTATOES, VEGETABLES AND FRUITS ARE LOST IN HARVESTING, TRANSPORTATION, PROCESSING AND STORAGE, AND MUCH MINERAL FERTILIZER IS SPOILING.
- NINE MONTH STATISTICS FOR 1977 SHOW EXCESS COSTS FOR INPUTS AT 1.5 BILLION RUBLES, PARTICULARLY IN THE CHEMICAL AND COAL INDUSTRIES AND IN LIGHT INDUSTRY, WITH MANY CASES OF UNJUSTIFIABLE DIFFERENCES IN COST OF PRODUCTION OF THE SAME ARTICLE. COST OVERRUNS ARE STILL FREQUENT.
- THE "KNOWN TROUBLES" OF FREIGHT TRANSPORT ARE ATTRIBUTABLE NOT ONLY TO INSUFFICIENT MEANS BUT EVEN TO CAUSES WHICH COULD BE ALLEVIATED WITHOUT LARGE EXPENDITURES, SUCH AS REDUCING LOADING/UNLOADING TIME AND FULLY UTILIZING ALL TYPES OF TRANSPORT. WHILE THE RAILROADS ARE (PREDICTABLY) FIRST CITED, TRUCK TRANSPORT IS ALSO INEFFICIENTLY EXPLOITED. IN THE CENTRAL BLACK EARTH REGION, ONLY 40 PERCENT OF AVAILABLE MACHINES AND ONE OF EVERY TWO COUPLERS IS USED, WITH VEHICLES IN USE ONLY

NINE HOURS OF EACH 24 AND OF THAT ONLY TWO IN ACTUALLY LOADING  
OR UNLOADING.

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- THE "LARGE RESOURCES" OF MARITIME, RIVER AND AIR TRANSPORT ARE  
MENTIONED, WITHOUT IT BEING SPECIFICALLY NOTED THAT THESE ARE  
INEFFICIENTLY UTILIZED.

- WHEREAS AGRICULTURAL SHORTCOMINGS ARE USUALLY BLAMED ON  
THE WEATHER, THE LETTER POINTS TO THE NEED BETTER TO EXPLOIT  
THE GROWING STOCK OF RESOURCES NOW AVAILABLE TO SOVIET FARMERS.  
IN TWO ADJACENT REGIONS, TAMBOV AND VORONEZH, THE LATTER WAS  
DEFICIENT IN GRAIN OUTPUT BY 3.5 CENTNERS/HECTAR, IN SUNFLOWERS  
BY 3.4 CENTNERS/HECTAR AND IN SUGAR BEETS BY 90 CENTNERS.

3. NOTEWORTHY ON THE POSITIVE SIDE WAS THE FAVORABLE REFERENCE  
TO THE GOOD RESULTS ACHIEVED, INTER ALIA, BY THE MAIN TYUMEN  
OIL AND GAS ADMINISTRATION, A KEY TO THE FUTURE ENERGY OUTPUT  
OF THE USSR. GOOD ORGANIZATION OF WORK WAS CITED FOR THE BAM  
RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT KAMAZ (SIC), ATOMMASH AND BASHKIR  
OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISES. ACCORDING TO THE LETTER, THE LVOV  
SYSTEM OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (MOSCOW A-298) IS RECEIVING  
BROADER APPLICATION, AND THE "MARK OF QUALITY" GIVEN TO A GROWING  
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BUT UNSPECIFIED PERCENTAGE OF PRODUCTION.

4. MISSING IN THE APPEAL, WHICH APPEARS TO BE MAINLY A TESTIMONY TO THE CONTINUATION OF WASTE AND INEFFICIENCY IN THE SOVIET ECONOMY, IS ANY INDICATION OF THE MEASURES WHICH THE LEADERSHIP IS TAKING TO BRING ABOUT CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM RESPONSIBLE. THE LETTER MERELY REITERATES THE PLENUM AND PLAN'S CALL FOR DISCIPLINE AND "SOCIALIST EMULATION." FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS SUCH SLOGANS HAVE RATED ONLY A FEW EDITORIALS AT THE TIME OF YEAR. THE "LETTER" THEREFORE PUTS MORE POLICY-LEVEL PUSH BEHIND THE CALL THAN HAS BEEN EVIDENT FOR SOME TIME. THE REAL TEST WILL BE WHETHER SUCH MORAL STIMULI MOVE THE SYSTEM ANY MORE. MANY SOVIET ECONOMISTS MAY NOW SUSPECT THAT IT IS THE SYSTEM ITSELF AND NOT A FEW MALEFACTORS WHICH NEEDS REFORM. AS A GOSPLAN OFFICIAL TOLD US NOT LONG AGO, SPEAKING OF THE COMPLAINT THAT GOSPLAN PLANS IN TOO GREAT DETAIL, "WHO TOLD US TO DO SO?" THE OBVIOUS ANSWER IS THAT IS WAS THE SAME PEOPLE WHO WROTE THE OPEN LETTER PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 14 IN PRAVDA.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TRADE, YOUTH  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
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